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# Message Text

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20
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01

COME-00 /058 W
---------- 057941
R 211804Z MAR 75
FM AMEMBASSY MADRID
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1368

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 1926

E.0. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, SP
SUBJ: VIEWS OF ARCHBISHOP OF MADRID ON PRESENT POLITICAL SITUATION

1. I CALLED ON MARCH 21 ON CARDINAL TARANCON, ARCHBISHOP OF MADRID AND PRESIDENT OF THE SPANISH BISHOPS CONFERENCE. HE IS REGARDED AS A LIBERAL, ALTHOUGH HE IS COMING UNDER INCREASING CRITICISM BY MORE PROGRESSIVE BISHOPS AND CLERGY FOR WHAT THEY BELIEVE TO BE HIS SOMEWHAT CONCILIATORY AND MODERATE STANCE ON A NUMBER OF CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES PARTICULARLY THOSE INVOLVING CHURCH/STATE RELATIONS.

2. THE CARDINAL MADE CLEAR TO ME HIS VIEW THAT IT WAS ESSENTIAL THAT THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN SPAIN EVOLVE TOWARD A MORE DEMOCRATIC FORM OF GOVERNMENT. THERE HAD BEEN MUCH PROGRESS IN SPAIN IN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL TERMNS AND THAT PROGRESS BROUGHT WITH IT A GROWING INSISTENCE FOR POLITICAL LIBERALIZATION. SPAIN TODAY WAS A COUNTRY WHERE OVER HALF THE POPULATION WERE YOUNG WHO HAD HAD NO CONNECTION OR KNOWLEGE OF THE CIVIL WAR. THEY WANTED TO MOVE FAST AND WERE ENORMOUSLY IMPATIENT WITH THOSE WHO HELD BACK. THE CHURCH'S ROLE HAD EVOLVED IMPORTANTLY SINCE VATICAN II, AND IN SPAIN IT HAD TO BE A FORCE FOR PROGRESS.

3.THE CARDINAL SAID HE WAS HOPEFUL THAT THE POLITICAL SITUATION WOULD EVOLVE IN A TIMELY WAY SO AS TO AVOID THE
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SHOCKS AND CONFRONTATIONS IN THE FUTURE (BY IMPLICATION

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OBVIOUSLY IN THE IMMEDIATE POST-FRANCO PERIOD). HE SAW NO
COMPARISON BETWEEN THE SITUATION IN SPAIN AND IN PORTUGAL,
BUT HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT EVENTS IN PORTUGAL SUPPORTED THE
POSITION OF THOSE IN THE REGIME WHO WANTED LITTLE OR NO CHANGE.
IN REFERRING TO THE GOVE-
ERNMENT'S RECENT SUSPENSION OF THE CHRISTIAN
ASSEMBLY OF VALLECAS (MADRID 1881), I ASKED THE CARDINAL
WHETHER THERE DID NOT SEEM TO BE A POLICY OF ONE STEP BACK AND
ONE STEP FORWARD. IN THIS CONNECTION, I ASKED WHETHER HE FELT
THAT FRNCO WOULD ISSUE AN EASTER AMNESTY FOR POLITICAL
PRISONERS. ON THE LATTER POINT, THE CARDINAL REPLIED THAT HE
DID NOT KNOW, BUT HE THOUGH THAT FRANCO WOULD ISSUE A COMMUTATION
OF SENTENCES RATHER THAN AN AMNESTY.
STABLER

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